

THE INVENTION CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method of controlling a set top box
2 comprising:
3 providing a set top box that can be
4 controlled by a telephone line coupled to the set top box;
5 receiving a telephone call from a calling
6 party via the telephone line; and
7 controlling the set top box via at least one
8 command transmitted by the calling party to the set top box
9 during the telephone call.

1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein controlling
2 the set top box via at least one command transmitted by the
3 calling party comprises receiving at least one
4 predetermined number dialed by the calling party.

1 3. The method of claim 1 wherein controlling
2 the set top box comprises disabling the set top box.

1 4. The method of claim 1 wherein controlling
2 the set top box comprises enabling the set top box.

1 5. The method of claim 1 wherein controlling
2 the set top box comprises directing the set top box to
3 decrease a volume of a television set coupled to the set
4 top box.

1 6. The method of claim 5 further comprising
2 directing the set top box to transmit an audio signal from
3 the calling party over a speaker of the television set.

1 7. The method of claim 1 wherein controlling
2 the set top box comprises directing the set top box to play
3 at least an audio portion of a television event over the
4 telephone line.

1 8. The method of claim 1 wherein controlling
2 the set top box comprises directing the set top box to tune
3 to a television event.

1 9. The method of claim 1 wherein controlling
2 the set top box comprises directing the set top box to
3 record a television event.

1 10. The method of claim 9 wherein directing the
2 set top box to record a television event comprises
3 directing the set top box to transmit a record command to a
4 video recording device.

1 11. The method of claim 1 wherein controlling
2 the set top box comprises directing the set top box to play
3 a telephone message previously recorded by the set top box.

1 12. An apparatus adapted to employ a telephone
2 interface comprising:

3 a processor comprising computer program code
4 adapted to control a set top box via at least one command
5 transmitted by a calling party over a telephone line
6 coupled to the set top box, the command being transmitted
7 during a telephone call.

1 13. A set top box comprising the apparatus of
2 claim 12.

1 14. A computer program product for controlling a
2 set top box comprising:

3 a medium readable by a computer, the
4 computer readable medium having means for controlling a set
5 top box via at least one command transmitted by a calling
6 party over a telephone line coupled to the set top box, the
7 command being transmitted during a telephone call.